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Poems:
Old
and
New

Frederick
George
Scott





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POEMS:

OLD AND NEW

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

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POEMS:

OLD AND NEW

BY

FREDERICK GEORGE SCOTT

AUTHOR OF "THE SOUL'S QUEST AND OTHER POEMS," "MY LATTICE,"
"THE UNNAMED LAKE," "ELTON HAZLEWOOD," ETC.

TORONTO

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TO THE READER.

THE kind reception given to Mr. Scott's former works has seemed to the publishers to justify the issue of the present volume, which contains not only selected poems from his three books of verse, but also those poems written by him since the publication of "The Unnamed Lake." Mr. Scott has not only very carefully and judiciously made choice of the poems which are here published, but he has also revised and corrected them, so that they have now assumed their permanent form.

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POEMS, OLD AND NEW.

DAWN.

THE immortal spirit hath no bars
To circumscribe its dwelling place ;
My soul hath pastured with the stars
Upon the meadow-lands of space.

My mind and ear at times have caught,
From realms beyond our mortal reach,
The utterance of Eternal Thought,
Of which all nature is the speech.

And high above the seas and lands,
On peaks just tipped with morning light,
My dauntless spirit mutely stands
With eagle wings outspread for flight.

THE UNNAMED LAKE.

It sleeps among the thousand hills
Where no man ever trod,
And only nature's music fills
The silences of God.

Great mountains tower above its shore,
Green rushes fringe its brim,
And o'er its breast for evermore
The wanton breezes skim.

Dark clouds that intercept the sun
Go there in Spring to weep,
And there, when Autumn days are done,
White mists lie down to sleep.

Sunrise and sunset crown with gold
The peaks of ageless stone,
Where winds have thundered from of old
And storms have set their throne.

No echoes of the world afar
Disturb it night or day,
But sun and shadow, moon and star
Pass and repass for aye.

'Twas in the grey of early dawn,
When first the lake we spied,
And fragments of a cloud were drawn
Half down the mountain side.

Along the shore a heron flew,
And from a speck on high,
That hovered in the deepening blue,
We heard the fish-hawk's cry.

Among the cloud-capt solitudes,
No sound the silence broke,
Save when, in whispers down the woods,
The guardian mountains spoke.

Through tangled brush and dewy brake,
Returning whence we came,
We passed in silence, and the lake
We left without a name.

IN THE WOODS.

THIS is God's house—the blue sky is the ceiling,
This wood the soft green carpet for His feet,
Those hills His stairs, down which the brooks come
stealing,
With baby laughter making earth more sweet.

And here His friends come, clouds and soft winds
sighing,
And little birds whose throats pour forth their love,
And spring and summer, and the white snow lying
Pencilled with shadows of bare boughs above.

And here come sunbeams through the green leaves
straying,
And shadows from the storm-clouds overdrawn,
And warm, hushed nights, when mother earth is
praying
So late that her moon-candle burns till dawn.

Sweet house of God, sweet earth so full of pleasure,

I enter at thy gates in storm or calm ;

And every sunbeam is a joy and treasure,

And every cloud a solace and a balm.

MY LATTICE.

My lattice looks upon the North,
The winds are cool that enter ;
At night I see the stars come forth,
Arcturus in the centre.

The curtain down my casement drawn
Is dewy mist, which lingers
Until my maid, the rosy dawn,
Uplifts it with her fingers.

The sparrows are my matin-bell,
Each day my heart rejoices,
When, from the trellis where they dwell,
They call me with their voices.

Then, as I dream with half-shut eye,
Without a sound or motion,
To me that little square of sky
Becomes a boundless ocean.

And straight my soul unfurls its sails
That blue sky-sea to sever ;
My fancies are the noiseless gales
That waft it on forever.

I sail into the depths of space
And leave the clouds behind me,
I pass the old moon's hiding-place,
The sun's rays cannot find me.

I sail beyond the solar light,
Beyond the constellations,
Across the voids where loom in sight
New systems and creations.

I pass great worlds of silent stone,
Whence light and life have vanished,
Which wander on to tracts unknown,
In lonely exile banished.

I meet with spheres of fiery mist
Which warm me as I enter,
Where—ruby, gold and amethyst—
The rainbow lights concentre.

And on I sail into the vast,
New wonders aye discerning,
Until my mind is lost at last,
And, suddenly returning,

I feel the wind, which, cool as dew,
Upon my face is falling,
And see again my patch of blue,
And hear the sparrows calling.

THE BURDEN OF TIME.

BEFORE the seas and mountains were brought forth,
I reigned. I hung the universe in space,
I capped earth's poles with ice to South and North,
And set the moving tides their bounds and place.

I smoothed the granite mountains with my hand,
My fingers gave the continents their form ;
I rent the heavens and loosed upon the land
The fury of the whirlwind and the storm.

I stretched the dark sea like a nether sky
Fronting the stars between the ice-clad zones ;
I gave the deep his thunder ; the Most High
Knows well the voice that shakes His mountain
thrones.

I trod the ocean caverns black as night,
And silent as the bounds of outer space,
And where great peaks rose darkly towards the light
I planted life to root and grow apace.

Then through a stillness deeper than the grave's,
The coral spires rose slowly one by one,
Until the white shafts pierced the upper waves
And shone like silver in the tropic sun.

I ploughed with glaciers down the mountain glen,
And graved the iron shore with stream and tide;
I gave the bird her nest, the lion his den,
The snake long jungle-grass wherein to hide.

In lonely gorge and over hill and plain,
I sowed the giant forests of the world ;
The great earth like a human heart in pain
Has quivered with the meteors I have hurled.

I plunged whole continents beneath the deep,
And left them sepulchred a million years ;
I called, and lo, the drowned lands rose from sleep,
Sundering the waters of the hemispheres.

I am the lord and arbiter of man—
I hold and crush between my finger-tips
Wild hordes that drive the desert caravan,
Great nations that go down to sea in ships.

In sovereign scorn I tread the races down,
As each its puny destiny fulfils,
On plain and island, or where huge cliffs frown,
Wrapt in the deep thought of the ancient hills.

The wild sea searches vainly round the land
For those proud fleets my arm has swept away ;
Vainly the wind along the desert sand
Calls the great names of kings who once held sway.

Yea, Nineveh and Babylon the great
Are fallen—like ripe ears at harvest-tide ;
I set my heel upon their pomp and state,
The people's serfdom and the monarch's pride.

One doom waits all—art, speech, law, gods, and men,
Forests and mountains, stars and shining sun,—
The hand that made them shall unmake again,
I curse them and they wither one by one.

Waste altars, tombs, dead cities where men trod,
Shall roll through space upon the darkened globe,
Till I myself be overthrown, and God
Cast off creation like an outworn robe,

THE FEUD.

“ I HEAR a cry from the Sansard cave,
O mother, will no one hearken ?
A cry of the lost,—will no one save ?
A cry of the dead, though the oceans rave,
And the scream of a gull as he wheels o’er a grave,
While the shadows darken and darken.”

“ Oh, hush thee, child, for the night is wet,
And the cloud-caves split asunder,
With lightning in a jagged fret,
Like the gleam of a salmon in the net,
When the rocks are rich in the red sunset,
And the stream rolls down in thunder.”

“ Mother, O mother, a pain at my heart,
A pain like the pang of dying.”
“ Oh, hush thee, child, for the wild birds dart
Up and down, and close and part,

Wheeling round where the black cliffs start,
And the foam at their feet is flying."

"O mother, a strife like the black clouds' strife,
And a peace that cometh after."

"Hush, child, for peace is the end of life,
And the heart of a maiden finds peace as a wife,
But the sky and the cliffs and the ocean are rife
With the storm and thunder's laughter."

"Come in, my sons, come in and rest,
For the shadows darken and darken,
And your sister is pale as the white swan's breast,
And her eyes are fixed and her lips are pressed
In the death of a name ye might have guessed,
Had ye twain been here to hearken."

"Hush, mother, a corpse lies on the strand,
And the spray is round it driven ;
It lies on its face, and one white hand
Points through the mist on the belt of sand
To where the cliffs of Sansard stand,
And the ocean's strength is riven."

“ Was it God, my sons, who laid him there?

Or the sea that left him sleeping?”

“ Nay, mother, our dirks where his heart was bare,

As swift as the rain through the teeth of the air ;

The foam-fingers play in the Saxon’s hair,

And the tides are round him creeping.”

“ Oh, curses on you hand and head,

Like the rains in this wild weather,

The guilt of blood is swift and dread,

Your sister’s face is cold and dead,

Ye may not part whom God would wed

And love hath knit together.”

SAMSON.

PLUNGED in night, I sit alone
Eyeless on this dungeon stone,
Naked, shaggy, and unkempt,
Dreaming dreams no soul hath dreamt.

Rats and vermin round my feet
Play unharmed, companions sweet ;
Spiders weave me overhead
Silken curtains for my bed.

Day by day the mould I smell
Of this fungus-blistered cell ;
Nightly in my haunted sleep
O'er my face the lizards creep.

Gyves of iron scrape and burn
Wrists and ankles when I turn,
And my collared neck is raw
With the teeth of brass that gnaw.

God of Israel, canst Thou see
All my fierce captivity?
Do Thy sinews feel my pains?
Hearest Thou the clanking chains?

Thou who madest me so fair,
Strong and buoyant as the air,
Tall and noble as a tree,
With the passions of the sea,

Swift as horse upon my feet,
Fierce as lion in my heat,
Rending, like a wisp of hay,
All that dared withstand my way,

Canst Thou see me through the gloom
Of this subterranean tomb,—
Blinded tiger in his den,
Once the lord and prince of men?

Clay was I ; the potter, Thou
With Thy thumb-nail smooth'dst my brow,
Roll'dst the spittle-moistened sands
Into limbs between Thy hands.

Thou didst pour into my blood
Fury of the fire and flood,
And upon the boundless skies
Thou didst first unclothe my eyes.

And my breath of life was flame,
God-like from the source it came,
Whirling round like furious wind,
Thoughts upgathered in the mind.

Strong Thou mad'st me, till at length
All my weakness was my strength ;
Tortured am I, blind and wrecked,
For a faulty architect.

From the woman at my side
Was I woman-like to hide
What she asked me, as if fear
Could my iron heart come near ?

Nay, I scorned and scorn again
Cowards who their tongues restrain ;
Cared I no more for Thy laws
Than a wind of scattered straws.

When the earth quaked at my name,
And my blood was all aflame,
Who was I to lie, and cheat
Her who clung about my feet ?

From Thy open nostrils blow
Wind and tempest, rain and snow ;
Dost Thou curse them on their course,
For the fury of their force ?

Tortured am I, wracked and bowed,
But the soul within is proud ;
Dungeon fetters cannot still
Forces of the tameless will.

Israel's God, come down and see
All my fierce captivity ;
Let Thy sinews feel my pains,
With Thy fingers lift my chains.

Then, with thunder loud and wild,
Comfort Thou Thy rebel child,
And with lightning split in twain
Loveless heart and sightless brain.

Give me splendour in my death—
Not this sickening dungeon breath,
Creeping down my blood like slime
Till it wastes me in my prime.

Give me back for one blind hour
Half my former rage and power,
And some giant crisis send,
Meet to prove a hero's end.

Then, O God, Thy mercy show—
Crush him in the overthrow
At whose life they scorn and point,
By its greatness out of joint.

ON AN OLD VENETIAN PORTRAIT.

THE features loom out of the darkness
As brown as an ancient scroll,
But the eyes gleam on with the fire that shone
In the dead man's living soul.

He is clad in a cardinal's mantle,
And he wears the cap of state,
But his lip is curled in a sneer at the world,
And his glance is full of hate.

Old age has just touched with its winter
The hair on his lip and chin ;
He stooped, no doubt, as he walked about,
And the blood in his veins was thin.

His date and his title I know not,
But I know that the man is there,
As cruel and cold as in days of old
When he schemed for the Pontiff's chair.

He never could get into Heaven,
Though his lands were all given to pay
For prayers to be said on behalf of the dead
From now till the judgment day.

His palace, his statues, and pictures
Were Heaven, at least for a time ;
And now he is "Where?"—why an ornament
there
On my wall, and I think him sublime.

For the gold of another sunset
Falls over him even now,
And it deepens the red of the cap on his head,
And it brings out the lines on his brow.

The ages have died into silence,
And men have forgotten his tomb,
But he still sits there in his cardinal's chair,
And he watches me now in the gloom.

SONG'S ETERNITY.

LITTLE bird on dewy wing
In the dawn of day,
All the pretty songs you sing
Pass away.
For although man's heart is stirred
By your happy voice,
You can only sing one word,—
“ Rejoice,” “ Rejoice.”

But the music poets make
Is a deathless strain,
For they do from sorrow take,
And from pain,
Such a sweetness as imparts
Joy that never dies,—
And their songs live in men's hearts
Beyond the skies.

A DREAM OF THE PREHISTORIC.

NAKED and shaggy, they herded at eve by the sound
of the seas,

When the sky and the ocean were red as with blood
from the battles of God,

And the wind like a monster sped forth with its feet
on the rocks and the trees,

And the sands of the desert blew over the wastes
of the drought-smitten sod.

Here, mad with the torments of hunger, despairing
they sank to their rest,

Some crouching alone in their anguish, some
gathered in groups on the beach ;

And with tears almost human the mother looked
down at the babe on her breast,

And her pain was the germ of our love, and her cry
was the root of our speech.

Then a cloud from the sunset arose, like a cormorant
gorged with its prey,
And extended its wings on the sky till it smothered
the stars in its gloom,
And ever the famine-worn faces were wet with the
wind-carried spray,
And dimly the voice of the deep to their ears was
a portent of doom.

And the dawn that rose up on the morrow, apparelled
in gold like a priest,
Through the smoke of the incense of morning,
looked down on a vision of death ;
For the vultures were gathered together and circled
with joy to their feast
On hearts that had ceased from their sorrow, and
lips that had yielded their breath.

Then the ages went by like a dream, and the shore-
line emerged from the deep,
And the stars as they watched through the years
saw a change on the face of the earth ;

For over the blanket of sand that had covered the
dead in their sleep
Great forests grew up with their green, and the
sources of rivers had birth.

And here in the after-times, man, the white-faced and
smooth-handed, came by,
And he built him a city to dwell in and temples of
prayer to his God ;
He filled it with music and beauty, his spirit aspired
to the sky,
While the dead by whose pain it was fashioned lay
under the ground that he trod.

He wrenched from great Nature her secrets, the stars
in their courses he named,
He weighed them and measured their orbits; he
harnessed the horses of steam ;
He captured the lightnings of heaven, the waves of
the ocean he tamed,—
And ever the wonder amazed him as one that
awakes from a dream.

But under the streets and the markets, the banks and
the temples of prayer,
Where humanity laboured and plotted, or loved
with an instinct divine,
Deep down in the silence and gloom of the earth that
had shrouded them there,
Were the fossil remains of a skull and the bones of
what once was a spine.

Enfolded in darkness forever, untouched by the
changes above,
And mingled as clay with the clay which the hands
of the ages had brought,
Were the hearts in whose furnace of anguish was
smelted the gold of our love,
And the brains from whose twilight of instinct has
risen the dawn of our thought.

But the law, that was victor of old with its heel on the
neck of the brute,
Still tramples our hearts in the darkness, still grinds
down our face in the dust ;

We are sown in corruption and anguish—whose
fingers will gather the fruit?

Our life is but lent for a season—for whom do we
hold it in trust?

In the vault of the sky overhead, in the gulfs that lie
under our feet,

The wheels of the universe turn, and the laws of the
universe blend ;

The pulse of our life is in tune with the rhythm of
forces that beat

In the surf of the furthest star's sea, and are spent
and regathered to spend.

Yet we trust in the will of the Being whose fingers
have spangled the night

With the dust of a myriad worlds, and who speaks
in the thunders of space ;

Though we see not the start or the finish, though
vainly we cry for the light,

Let us mount in the glory of manhood and meet the
God-Man face to face.

A REVERIE.

O TENDER love of long ago,
 O buried love, so near me still,
On tides of thought that ebb and flow,
 Beyond the empire of the will;
To-night with mingled joy and pain
I fold thee to my heart again.

And down the meadows, dear, we stray,
 And under woods still clothed in green,
Though many Springs have passed away
 And many harvests there have been,
Since through the youth-enchanted land
We wandered idly hand in hand.

Then every brook was loud with song,
 And every tree was stirred with love,
And every breeze that passed along
 Was like the breath of God above ;—

And now to-night we go the ways
We went in those sweet summer days.

Dear love, thy dark and earnest eyes
Look up as tender as of yore,
And, purer than the evening skies,
Thy cheeks have still the rose they wore ;
I—I have changed, but thou art fair
And fresh as in life's morning air.

What little hands these were to chain
So many years a wayward heart ;
How slight a girlish form to reign
As queen upon a throne apart
In a man's thought, through hopes and fears,
And all the changes of the years.

Dear girl, behold, thy boy is now
A man and grown to middle age ;
The lines are deep upon his brow,
His heart hath been grief's hermitage ;
But hidden where no eye can see
His boyhood's love still lives for thee,—

Still blooms above thy grave to-day,
Where death hath harvested the land,
Though such long years have passed away
Since down the meadows hand in hand
We went with hearts too full to know
How deep their love was long ago.

IN VIA MORTIS.

O YE great company of dead that sleep
Under the world's green rind, I come to you,
With warm, soft limbs, with eyes that laugh and weep,
Heart strong to love, and brain pierced through and
through

With thoughts whose rapid lightnings make my
day—

To you my life-stream courses on its way
Through margin-shallows of the eternal deep.

And naked shall I come among you, shorn
Of all life's vanities, its light and power,
Its earthly lusts, its petty hate and scorn,
The gifts and gold I treasured for an hour ;
And even from this house of flesh laid bare,—
A soul transparent as heat-quivering air,
Into your fellowship I shall be born.

I know you not, great forms of giant kings,
Who held dominion in your iron hands,
Who toyed with battles and all valourous things,
Counting yourselves as gods when on the sands
Ye piled the earth's rock fragments in an heap
To mark and guard the grandeur of your sleep,
And quaffed the cup which death, our mother, brings.

I know you not, great warriors, who have fought
When blood flowed like a river at your feet,
And each death which your thunderous sword-strokes
wrought
Than love's wild rain of kisses was more sweet.
I know you not, great minds, who with the pen
Have graven on the fiery hearts of men
Hopes that breed hope and thoughts that kindle
thought.

But ye are there, ingathered in the realm
Where tongueless spirits speak from heart to heart,
And eyeless mariners without a helm
Steer down the seas where ever close and part
The windless clouds ; and all ye know is this,

Ye are not as ye were in pain or bliss,
But a strange numbness doth all thought o'erwhelm.

And I shall meet you, O ye mighty dead,
Come late into your kingdom through the gates
Of one fierce anguish whitherto I tread,
With heart that now forgets, now meditates
Upon the wide fields stretching far away
Where the dead wander past the bounds of day,
Past life, past death, past every pain and dread.

Oft, when the winter sun slopes down to rest
Across the long, crisp fields of gilded white,
And without sound upon earth's level breast
The grey tide floods around of drowning night,
A whisper, like a distant battle's roll
Heard over mountains, creeps into my soul,
And there I entertain it like a guest.

It is the echo of your former pains,
Great dead, who lie so still beneath the ground ;
Its voice is as the night wind after rains,
The flight of eagle wings which once were bound,

And as I listen in the starlit air
My spirit waxeth stronger than despair,
Till in your might I burst life's prison chains.

Then mount I swiftly to your dark abodes,
Beyond our mortal ken, where now ye dwell
In houses wrought of dreams on dusky roads
Which lead in mazes whither none may tell,
For they who thread them faint beside the way,
And ever as they pass through twilight grey
Doubt walks beside them, and a terror goads.

And there the great dead welcome me, and bring
Their cups of tasteless pleasure to my mouth;
Here am I little worth, there am I king,
For pulsing life still slakes my spirit's drouth,
And he who yet doth hold the gift of life
Is mightier than the heroes of past strife
Who have been mowed in death's great harvesting.

And here and there along the silent streets
I see some face I knew, perchance I loved;
And as I call it each blank wall repeats
The uttered name, and swift the form hath moved

And heedless of me passes on and on,
Till lo, the vision from my sight hath gone
Softly as night at touch of dawn retreats.

Yet must life's vision fade, and I shall come,
O mighty dead, into your hidden land,
When these eyes see not and these lips are dumb,
And all life's flowers slip from this nerveless hand ;
Then will ye gather round me like a tide,
And with your faces the strange scenery hide,
While your weird music doth each sense benumb.

So would I live this life's brief span, great dead,
As ye once lived it, with an iron will,
A heart of steel to conquer, a mind fed
On richest hopes and purposes, until
Well pleased ye set for me a royal throne,
And welcome as confederate with your own
The soul gone from me on my dying bed.

THOR.

HERE stood the great god Thor,
There he planted his foot,
And the whole world shook, from the shore
To the circle of mountains God put
For its crown in the days of yore.

The waves of the sea uprose,
The trees of the wood were uptorn,
Down from the Alps' crown of snows
The glacial avalanche borne
Thundered at daylight's close.

But the moon-lady curled at his feet,
Like a smoke that will not stir,
When the summer hills swoon with the heat,
Till his passion was centered on her,
And the shame of his yielding grew sweet.

Empty the moon-lady's car,
And idly it floated away,
Tipped up as she left it afar,
Pale in the red death of day,
With its nether lip turned to a star.

Fearful the face of the god,
Stubborn with sense of his power,
The seas would roll back at his nod
And the lion-voiced thunder-clouds lower,
While the lightning he broke as a rod.

Fearful his face was in war,
Iron with fixed look of hate,
Through the battle-smoke thick and the roar
He trod with invincible weight
Till the legions fell back before Thor.

But the white thing that curled at his feet
Rose up slowly beside him like mist,
Infinite, wan, incomplete,
Till she touched the rope veins on his wrist
And love pulsed to his heart with a beat.

Then he looked, and from under her hair,
As from out of a mist, grew her eyes,
And firmer her flesh was and fair
With the tint of the sorrowful skies,
Sun-widowed and veiled with thin air.

She seemed of each lovable thing
The soul that infused it with grace,
Her thoughts were the song the birds sing,
The glory of flowers was her face,
And her smile was the smile of the spring.

Madly his blood with a bound
Leaped from his heart to his brain,
Till his thoughts and his senses were drowned
In the ache of a longing like pain,
In a hush that was louder than sound.

Then the god, bending his face,
"Loveliest," said he, "if death
Mocked me with skulls in this place,
And age and spent strength and spent breath,
Yet would I yield to thy grace ;

“ Yet would I circle thee, love,
With these arms which are smoking from wars,
Though the father up-gathered above,
In his anger, each ocean that roars,
Each boulder the cataracts shove,

“ To hurl at me down from his throne,
Though the flood were as wide as the sky.
Yea, love, I am thine, all thine own,
Strong as the ocean to lie
Slave to thy bidding alone.”

Folds of her vesture fell soft
As she lifted her eyes up to his :
“ Nay, love, for a man speaketh oft
In words that are hot as a kiss,
But man's love may be donned and be doft.

“ Love would have life for its field—
Love would have death for its goal ;
And the passion of war must yield
To the passion of love in the soul,
And the eyes that Love kisses are sealed.

“ Wouldst thou love if the scorn of the world
Covered thy head with its briars ;
When, soft as an infant curled
In its cradle, thou, chained with desires,
Lay helpless when flags were unfurled ? ”

Fiercely the god's anger broke,
Fired with the flames in his blood :
“ Who careth what words may be spoke ?
For the feet of this love is a flood,
And its finger the weight of a yoke.

“ I bow me, sweet, under its power,
I, who have stooped to none ;
I bring thee my strength for a dower,
And deeds like the path of the sun ;
I am thine for an age or an hour.”

Then the moon-lady softly unwound
The girdle of arms interlaced,
And the gold of her tresses unbound,
Till it fell from her head to her waist,
And then from her waist to the ground.

“ Love, thou art mine, thou art mine,”
Softly she uttered a spell ;
“ Under the froth is the wine,
Under the ocean is Hell,
Over the ocean stars shine.

“ Lull him, ye winds of the South,
Charm him, ye rivers that sing,
Flowers be the kiss on his mouth,
Let his heart be the heart of the spring,
And his passion the hot summer drouth.”

Swiftly extending her hands,
She made a gold dome of her hair ;
Dumb with amazement he stands,
Till down, without noise in the air,
The moon-car descends to the sands.

He taketh her fingers in his,
Shorn of his strength and his will ;
His brave heart trembles with bliss—
Trembles and will not be still,
Mad with the wine of her kiss.

They mount in the car, and its beams
Shoot over the sea and the earth,
And clothe in a net-work of dreams
The mountains where rivers have birth,
And the lakes that are fed by the streams.

Swiftly ascending, the car
Silvers the clouds in its flight,
Piercing the ether afar
Up to a bridge out of sight
That skirteth the path of a star.

One end of the bridge lay on land,
The other hung over the deep ;
It was fashioned of ropes of grey sand,
And cemented together with sleep,
With its undergirths formed like a hand.

Pleasant the land to the sight,
Laden with blossoms and trees,
And the grasses to left and to right
Waved in the wind like the seas,
When the blue day is high in the height.

Under the breezy bowers
Cushions of moss were laid,
And ever through sultry hours
Fairy-like fountains played,
Cooling the earth with their showers.

The horizon was crowned with blue hills,
And woodland and meadowland lay
Lit with the glory that thrills
Souls in a dreamland way,
Where the nightingales sing to the rills.

Deer and the white kine feed
On the foam-fretted shores of the lake,
And through many a flowery mead,
And from many a forest and brake,
The gold birds of paradise speed.

The lissome moon-lady led on
Up to a bower on a hill
With the flowers at its door rained upon
By a fountain as constant and still
As the bow in the cloud that has gone.

“O love, thou art weary,” she said,
 “Who erst wast so valiant and strong,
And here will I make thee a bed,
 And here will I sing thee a song
To the tune of the leaves overhead.

“And here will thy great strength flow,
 Melted away in the sweet,
Soft touch of ineffable woe,
 Which is heart of the joy made complete,
And the taste of the pleasure we know.”

Where the mosses were piled in a heap,
 He laid his giant form down,
And she charmed all his senses to sleep,
 With her hands on his head like a crown,
Till the sound of his breathing was deep.

With a noise like a serpent's hiss,
 The moon-lady bent her head,
And she sucked out his breath with a kiss—
 A kiss that was subtle and dread,
Like the sorrow that lurks in a bliss.

Then she rose and waved her hands
In circles over the sod,
And her gold hair wove in strands
Round the limbs of the sleeping god,
With the strength of adamant bands.

She opened the great, clenched fist,
And softly the lady withdrew.
Was it only a serpent that hissed ?
For her face is transparent as dew,
And her garments are thin as the mist.

Spellbound on the dreamland floor,
Chained with the golden hair,
Weak as a babe lay Thor,
While the fountain played soft in the air,
And the nightingales sang evermore.

Like a babe in its cradle curled,
He was chained with the chain of desire,
Though they needed his arm in the world,
For the battle-strife raged, and its fire
And the flags of the gods were unfurled.

Then Odin, the father of Heaven,
 Called a council of gods on high,
To each was a white cloud given
 At the foot of his throne in the sky,
And the steps of his throne were seven.

“Children,” the father cried,
 “Lost is the great god Thor,
Lost is the sword at his side,
 Lost is his arm in the war,
And the fury which all things defied.

“In the heart of a dreamland bower
 Sleepeth he under a spell,
Who yielded his strength for an hour,
 And under the meshes of Hell
He is chained by invincible power.

“None may his shackles unbind ;
 Strength must return to his will,
And himself must unprison his mind
 From the dreams he is dreaming still,
In the moon-lady’s tresses entwined.

“ Over the mountains the road,
Dismal and drear to return,
Face it he must with his load,
Though the underbrakes crackle and burn,
Though the serpent-bites blister and goad.

“ Not a mere shadow is sin,
Clinging like wine to the lip,
To be wiped from the mouth and the chin
After man taketh a sip ;
But a poison that lurketh within.

“ The forces that hold back the sea,
That grapple the earth from beneath,
Are not older than those which decree
The marriage of sin unto death
In the sinner, whoever he be.

“ Who of our numbers will go
Up to the death-tainted land,
Braving the dangers, and so
Reaching the heart and the hand
And the form of the god lying low ? ”

“Sire,” answered Balder the fair,
“Rugged the journey and long,
Manifold dangers are there,
But my heart and my arms are strong,
And my soul is as pure as the air.

“I will go, for we need him in war,
And without him we struggle and die ;
I will put on the armour he bore,
And gird on his sword to my thigh ;
I will sit there and say, ‘I am Thor.’

“Perchance when he opens his eyes,
Shorn of his own armour-plate,
Smitten with rage and surprise,
Burning with anger and hate,
He will burst from the bed where he lies.

“Swift as the kiss of the fire,
Knowledge shall flash to his brain,
And the thought of his past self inspire
His spirit with valour again,
Till he shatter the bonds of desire.”

So Balder, the fairest of all,
And purest of gods by the throne,
Went from the heavenly hall
Into the darkness alone,
To loosen the god from his thrall.

Black was the charger he rode,
Winged, and its eye-balls of fire ;
From mountain to mountain it strode,
Spurning the valleys as mire,
Till it sprang into air with its load.

Then swift, with its neck side-curved,
Half hid in the smoke of its breath,
Upward it bounded, and hurled
Volleys and splinters of death
From the fire of its hoofs on the world.

The moon-lady leaned from her car
And beheld the fierce course of the god,
For, as though with the birth of a star,
A fire track as straight as a rod
Burnt in the heavens afar.

Then she trembled and sickened with fear,
Till her face grew as white as the mist
When at day-dawn the stars disappear,
And her body did coil and untwist
Like a serpent's folds caught in a weir.

Her heart was a fire that was spent,
Her lips could not utter a charm,
And she cowered from his sight as he went,
While Balder flew by without harm,
'Neath the shield of a pure intent.

He came to the moon-lady's bower,
And girded the sword to his thigh,
And put on the cincture of power,
Unbound from the god lying by,
Nor waited a day nor an hour ;

For, startled, the sleeper awoke,
Black-visaged, like storm on the skies ;
But Balder sat upright, nor spoke,
Till the flames darted out of Thor's eyes
And the passionate silence he broke.

“ Who is it, when dreaming is o’er,
 Mocks me with helm like to mine,
Ungirding the armour I bore
 From the sweet silken nets that entwine ? ”
Quoth Balder, “ Behold ! I am Thor.

“ I am he that was ‘ Thunderer ’ called,
 And my fame is as wide as the world ;
At my anger the rocks were appalled
 And the waves of the sea were up-curved,
But now I am weak and enthralled.

“ The battle is fierce on the earth,
 While I sit here idle and still ;
Unfulfilled are the hopes of my birth,
 For the strength of the mind is the will,
And the will is more potent than girth.

“ The foes of the gods wax bold,
 And they mock at the armies of heaven ;
At their banquets the story is told—
 ‘ A weak woman’s heart hath been given
To Thor, the avenger of old.’

“ And the wives, as they sit by the cot,
Sing, ‘ Sleep, for the god cannot come ;
Sleep, the avenger is not ;
Hush, let his praises be dumb ;
Hush, let his name be forgot.’ ”

Then the god, smitten with pain,
Shamèd and stung to the heart,
Knowing a god’s voice again,
Rent every fetter apart,
And sprang from the moon-lady’s chain.

Instantly vanished in night
Fountains and meadows and streams,
Never a glimmer of light
Lit up the palace of dreams,
As the god made his way, without sight,

Back to the heavenly shore,
Over mountain and wild ravine,
Morasses, and seas that roar,
Till the portals of heaven were seen
And he stood in Valhalla once more.

A NOCTURNE.

IN the little French church at the bend of the river,
When rainy and loud was the wind in the night,
An altar-lamp burnt to the mighty Grace-giver,
The Holy Child Jesus—the Light of the Light.

It was hung on a chain from the roof, and was
swinging,
As if the unseemly commotion to chide,
Like the choir-master's baton when hushing the
singing,
Or the tongue of the bell when its tollings subside.

It lit up the poor paper flowers on the altar,
And odd were the shadows it scattered around
On pulpit and lectern, on choir-seat and psalter,
While the chains threw the ghost of a cross on the
ground.

The people at home in their cabins were sleeping,
The curé was tucked in his four-posted bed ;
While under the willows the river was creeping
As if silent with fear of the wind overhead.

But the little dark church had its own congregation—
The shadows that swayed on the pews and the
floor—
While the rafters that creaked were a choir whose
laudation
Had an organ for base in the hurricane's roar.

The rusty gilt cock on the *flèche* was the preacher,
And scolding and grumpy his voice was to hear,
As he turned to the storm like some faithful old
teacher
Who prophesies hard things regardless of fear.

But the service reflected the state of the weather,
For though each, I must say, did his part with a
will,
The preacher and choir spoke and sang all together,
And the shapes on the benches would never sit
still.

Yet there was the Host in the midst of the altar,
Where that little red curtain of damask was hung—
The God whom King David has praised in the
psalter,
And to whom the whole choir of the ages has sung.

But so big is the heart of our God, the Life-giver,
That in it life's humour and pathos both meet ;
So I doubt not that night in the church by the river,
The poor old storm's service to Him sounded
sweet.

NATURA VICTRIX.

ON the crag I sat in wonder,
Stars above me, forests under ;
 Through the valleys came and went
 Tempest forces never spent,
And the gorge sent up the thunder
 Of the stream within it pent.

Round me with majestic bearing
Stood the giant mountains, wearing
 Helmets of eternal snows,
 Cleft by nature's labour throes—
Monster faces mutely staring
 Upward into God's repose.

At my feet in desolation
Swayed the pines, a shadowy nation,
 Round the woodlake deep and dread,
 Round the river glacier-fed,

Where a ghostly undulation
Shakes its subterranean bed.

And I cried, "O wildernesses!
Mountains! which the wind caresses
In a savage love sublime,
Through the bounds of space and time,
All your moods and deep distresses
Roll around me like a chime!

"Lo, I hear the mighty chorus
Of the elements that bore us
Down the course of nature's stream,
Onward in a haunted dream
Towards the darkness, where before us
Time and death forgotten seem!

"Now behold the links of lightning,
Round the neck of storm-god tightening,
Madden him with rage and shame
Till he smites the earth with flame,
In the darkening and the brightening
Of the clouds on which he came!

“ Nature ! at whose will are driven
Tides of ocean, winds of heaven,
 Thou who rulest near and far
 Forces grappling sun and star,
Is to thee the knowledge given
 Whence these came and what they are ?

“ Is thy calm the calm of knowing
Whence the force is, whither going ?
 Is it but the blank despair
 Of the wrecked, who does not care
Out at sea what wind is blowing
 To the death that waits him there ?

“ Mother Nature, stern aggressor,
Of thy child the mind-possessor,
 Thou art in us like a flood,
 Welling through our thought and blood—
Force evolving great from lesser,
 As the blossom from the bud.

“ Yea, I love thy fixed, enduring
Times and seasons, life procuring

From abysmal heart of thine ;
And my spirit would resign
All its dreams and hopes alluring
With thy spirit to combine.

“ Would that I, amid the splendour
Of the thunder-blasts, could render
Back the dismal dole of birth,
Fusing soul-clouds in the girth
Of thy rock breasts, or the tender
Green of everlasting earth.

“ Haply, when the scud was flying
And the lurid daylight dying
Through the rain-smoke on the sea,
Thoughtless, painless, one with thee,
I, in perfect bondage lying,
Should forever thus be free.

“ Mighty spirits, who have striven
Up life's ladder-rounds to heaven,
Or ye freighted ones who fell
On the poppy slopes of hell,

When the soul was led or driven,
Knew ye not who wrought the spell ?

“ Understood not each his brother
From the features of our mother
Stamped on every human face ?
Did not earth, man’s dwelling-place,
Draw ye to her as no other,
With a stronger bond than grace ?

“ Tempest hands the forests rending,
Placid stars the night attending,
Mountains, storm-clouds, land and sea,
Nature !—make me one with thee ;
From my soul its pinions rending,
Chain me to thy liberty.

“ Hark ! the foot of death is nearing,
And my spirit aches with fearing,
Hear me, mother, hear my cry,
Merge me in the harmony
Of thy voice which stars are hearing
Wonder-stricken in the sky.

“Mother, will no sorrow move thee?
Does the silence heartless prove thee?
Thou who from the rocks and rain
Mad'st this soul, take back again
What thy fingers wrought to love thee
Through the furnace of its pain.

“Giant boulders, roll beside me;
Tangled ferns, bow down and hide me,
Hide me from the face of death;
Or, great Nature, on thy breath
Send some mighty words to guide me
Till the demon vanisheth.”

Then, as sweet as organ playing,
Came a voice, my fears allaying,
From the mountains and the sea,
“Wouldst thou, soul, be one with me,
In thy might the slayer slaying?
Wrestle not with what must be.”

Heart and spirit in devotion,
Vibrant with divine emotion,

Bowed before that mighty sound,
And amid the dark around
Quaffed the strength of land and ocean
In a sacrament profound.

Then I burst my bonds asunder,
And my voice rose in the thunder
With a full and powerful breath,
Strong for what great nature saith,
And I bade the stars in wonder
See me slay the slayer—death.

THE FRENZY OF PROMETHEUS.

THE ocean beats its noontide harmonies
Upon the sunlit lines of cragged coast,
And a wild rhythm pulses through my brain
With pauses and responsive melodies ;
And sky and ocean, air and day and night
Topple and reel upon my burning blood,
Run to and fro, whirl round and round and round,
Till, lo ! the cosmic madness breathes a strain
Of perfect music through the universe.
I hear it with my ears, eyes, hands and feet ;
I drink it with my breath ; my skin sucks in,
At every fevered pore, fine threads of sound,
Which plunge vibrations of the wind-swept harp
Of earth and heaven deep into my soul,
Till each sense quickens with a freshened life,
And thoughts arise which bring me ease from pain.

O peace, sweet peace ! I melt and ebb away ;
On softened rocks outstretch relaxèd limbs,
With half-shut eyes deliciously enthralled.
What passion ! what delight, what ecstasies !
Joy fills my veins with rivers of excess ;
I rave, I quiver, as with languid eyes
I see the hot air dance upon the rocks,
And sky, sea, headlands blend in murmurous haze.

Now grander, with the organ's bass that drives
The under-world in darkness through despair
Of any day-dawn on its inky skies,
The music rolls around me, and above
From shattered cliffs, from booming caverns' mouths,
Pierced by the arrow-screams of startled gulls.
Now strength, subdued, but waxing more and more,
Reanimates my limbs ; I feel my power
Full as the flooding ocean, or the force
Which grinds the glaciers on their boulder feet.
My hands could pluck up mountains by the roots,
My arm could hurl back ocean from the shore
To wallow in his frothy bed. What hate ! what scorn !
What limitless imaginations stretch

And burst my mind immense ! I stand apart ;
I am alone, all-glorious, supreme.
My huge form like a shadow sits and broods
Upon the globe, gigantic, like the shade
Eclipsing moons. With bowed head on my hand
In gloom excessive, now, behold, I see
Beneath my feet the stream of human life,
The sad procession of humanity.
They come, the sons of Hellas, beautiful,
Swift-minded, lithe, with luscious, laughing lips
That suck delight from every tree of life ;
Born of the sunshine, winds, and sounding sea.
They pass, and, lo, a mightier nation moves
In stern battalions, trampling forests down,
Cleaving the mountains, paving desert lands
With bones that e'en when bleaching face the foe,
Welding soft outskirt nations into iron—
An iron hand to grasp and hold the world !

Now dust, like smoke, from Asia's central steppes,
Darkens the rigid white of mountain peaks,
And the plains bristle with the Tartar hordes,
Suckled of mares, flat-faced, implacable,

Deadly in war, revengeful, treacherous,
Brown as the craggy glens of Caucasus.
They pass, and nations pass, and like a dream
A throne emerges from the western sea,
The latest empire of a dying world.
E'en as I look its splendour melts away,
And round me, gathering volume, music rolls,
Till sinews crack and eyes are blind with power ;
Till struggles, battles mixed with smoke and blood,
Men, nations, life and death, and desolate cries,
Melt in the inner pulses in my ears,
And a wild tempest blows the daylight out.

And now I am alone beneath the stars,
Alone, in infinite silence. Am I God,
That I am so supreme? Whence is this power?
Cannot my will repeople these waste lands?
I cry aloud. The vault of space resounds,
And hollow-sounding echoes, from the stars
Rebounding, shake the earth and crinkle up
The sea in million furrows. Lo, the stars
Now fade, the sun arises, it is day—
Half day, half night ; the sun has lost his strength.

I am his equal, nay, I am his king !
I rise and move across the earth, the seas
Have vanished, and I tread their empty beds,
And crush down continents of powdered bones.

O great light, late supreme, what need of thee ?
For all are dead, men, nations, life and death,
And God is dead, and here alone am I—
I, with strong hands to pluck thee from thy course,
Boundless in passion, will, omnipotent.
The impulses concentrate in my heart
Which erstwhile shook the universe. O Sun,
Acknowledge now thy king, put down thy head
Beneath my feet, and lift me higher still
To regions that out-top the adoring spheres,
And bask in primal thought, too vast to shape
Into similitude of earthly things.

I would have all, know all. I thirst and pant
And hunger for the universe. Now from the earth,
Beneath thy rays, O Sun, the steams arise,
Sheeting the world's dead face in film of cloud,
The voices of the dead. Peace, let me be.

Go on thy way, spent power, leave me here
To reign in silence, rave and scorn and hate,
To glory in my strength, tear down the skies,
Trample the crumbling mountains under foot,
Laugh at the tingling stars, burn with desire
Unconquerable, till the universe
Is shattered at the core, its splinters flung
By force centrifugal beyond the light,
Until the spent stars from their orbits reel,
And, hissing down the flaming steeps of space,
With voice of fire proclaim me God alone.

DION.

A POEM.

ARGUMENT.

Dion of Syracuse (408-353 B.C.), philosopher, was a near relative, through his wife Arete, of the tyrant Dionysius the Second, by whom he was banished. He took up his residence at Athens, but on hearing that the tyrant had seized his son and given Arete in marriage to another, with a small and faithful force he returned to Syracuse, captured the place, and drove Dionysius into Ortygia, a fortress within the city walls. As soon as their oppression was relieved, the suspicious Syracusans began to fear the power of Dion, although he had nobly refused to make concessions to Dionysius when urged thereto by the passionate appeals of Arete and her son, held captive in Ortygia. On hearing of a plot formed against him among the citizens, by Heracleides, without taking revenge on the thankless city, Dion withdrew to Leontini, but only to be speedily recalled to rescue the people a second time from the ravages of Dionysius, who had charged out upon the town as soon as Dion had withdrawn. Again Dion returned to Syracuse,

and this time succeeded in routing the tyrant from his stronghold and restoring peace. With a magnanimity equal to his valour, he pardoned Heracleides and his confreres. On breaking into the deserted fortress at the head of his troops, Dion, after years of separation, found his wife Arete. Dion naturally succeeded to the throne of the deposed monarch, but his reforms and the severity of his manners and rule rendered him unpopular with his fickle fellow-townsmen, and plots were formed for his assassination. He scorned to take precautions against attack, and so fell a victim to his valour. He was surrounded, on the day of the festival of the Koreia, in his apartment in the palace, by a band of youths of distinguished muscular strength, who endeavoured to throw and strangle him. But the old warrior proving too strong for them, they were obliged to send out one of their number through a back door to procure a sword. With this Dion, a man in many ways too great for his age and circumstances, was despatched.

PRAY youths, what urgent business claims our ear
On this high feast when all keep holiday?
Already do the gay-decked barges move
Across the harbour to the sacred grove,
And shouts and music reach us even here,
Where through the balustrades the dancing sea

Marbles this chamber with reflected lights.
What! Is it treason? Ye have come to slay ;
I read your purpose right. The palace guards
Have been secured, and all retreat cut off,
And I am at your mercy. It is well.
So often have I met death face to face,
His eyes now wear the welcome of a friend's.
Is it for hate of Dion, or for gold,
Ye come to stain your honour with my blood?
And think ye I shall kneel and fawn on you,
And cry for mercy with a woman's shrieks?
Though me, like some old lion in his den,
Fate, stratagems, not ye, have tracked to death.
The lion is old, but all his teeth are sound.
What! Ye would seize me? There, I shake you off.
Ye did not deem these withered arms so strong
That ye five cubs could thus be kept at bay,
Despite your claws and fury and fierce barks.
But I am Dion—Dion, Plato's friend—
And I have faced the rain of human blood,
The lightning of the sword-strokes on my helm,
The thunder of on-rushing cavalry,
When ye were were sucking babies at the breast.

And think ye I am one whom ye can slay
By throttling, as an outcast slays her child,
Pinching the life out of its tiny throat?
Not this shall be my death, for I am royal,
And I must royally die. Go, fetch a sword,
And I shall wed it nobly like a king.

I brought you manhood with my conquering arm,
I offered Syracuse a way to fame.
I could have made our city reign as queen,
With her dominion founded in the sea,
Cemented with wise bands of equal laws,
A constitution wrought by sober minds,
Expanding with its growth, yet ye would not,
But mewed and babbled, cried and sulked again,
Like children that will quarrel for a coin
And yet its value know not. I am king,
Beyond this honour, if it honour be,
To sit enthroned above so base a herd,—
A king of mine own self. My thoughts are
 matched
With those of gods, I have no kin with you.
Go publish my last words when I am dead,

And sting the city's heart with them. Say, "Thus,
O men of Syracuse, thus Dion spake,
Falling upon the threshold of his death,
With face turned back, eyes fixed, and cheek
unblanched,

For one last moment, at the braying mob,
Ere into dark he passed to meet his peers,
The gods and heroes of the nether world."
Yea, tell the foolish rabble, "Dion sends
His love and duty as a warrior should,
Unto the sweet earth of his native town,
Soon to be watered with his warmest blood.
He loved her pleasant streets, her golden air,
The circle of her hills, her sapphire sea,
And he loved once, and loved unto his death,
The poor, half-brutal thing her mob became
Under the heel of tyrants; had he not,
He might have finished out his course of days
And died among the pillows on his bed.
But he so loved his Syracuse that she,
Grown sick of his great heart, let out its red
Upon the pebbles of her streets, and cried,
' Mine own hands slew him, for he loved too much.'

“ Too much, ay, at her piteous call he came
And gripped the tyrant’s heel upon your neck,
And overthrew him, bidding you uprise.
And when your silly fathers feared his strength,
And set their murderous snares around his path,
The sword he drew for her, for her he sheathed,
Disdaining, as a warrior, to be wroth
At the snake’s use of its recovered power
To sting the breast that warmed it back to life ;
And he whose word could then have crushed the
town

Into a shapeless ruin at his feet,
Led off to Leontini all his men,
Who, had ye slain him, would upon the ground
Have heaped your bodies for his funeral pyre ;
And who, with eyes that cursed her very stones,
Left Syracuse unharmed, at his command.
Yet on the morrow in your new distress
Ye were not loath to send with craven haste
Your weeping envoys fawning at his feet
And crying, ‘ Come and save us ; oh, forget,
Great Dion, how we wronged thee ; come again,
Yet this once more, and save our Syracuse.’

“ There are no depths in ocean, earth or sky
So deep as Dion’s pride ; there is no force
Commensurate with the scorn which curled his lip
In detestation of the fickle world,
Before he plunged forever down death’s gulf.
So proud was he that he despised success,
His manhood was the crown his spirit wore.
His stern heart felt no pulse of arrogant joy
When charging foremost on the routed ranks
Of Dionysius in precipitous flight ;
Nor when, as conqueror, up the city’s hill
The wild mob bore him with their loud acclaims,
And women from the house-roof hailed him king,
Shrilling his praises out to the great deep.
But he was proud, as might some god be proud,
At his self-conquest, when for mercy sued
False Heracleides, whose perfidious plot
To overthrow him well-nigh wrought your doom.
Ye saw the traitor kneel, ye heard his words,
How his swift tongue did hide the poisoned fangs.
But when all voices shouted, ‘ Let him die,’
The one most wronged obeyed that inner voice
Which bade him spare a fallen enemy,

And stooping down, he raised and pardoned him,
Well knowing as ye the baseness of the man,
But being too great for meanness like revenge.

“ Had Dion not been proud, O Syracuse,
He might have told such tale of woes endured
As would, like some moist south-wind after frost,
Have made your very walls and porticos
Run down with tears of silent sympathy.
Ye thought that day he read to you unmoved
The letter that his own son wrote to him
In his young blood, sobbed out with broken cries,
While Dionysius pressed the red-hot irons
Close on his slim boy’s back, that he was stone,
Inhuman, or if human, weak like you,
And would with treason buy him from his chains
Nay, but ye knew not how his father’s heart
Burnt with the fury of the molten sun,
And how the ashes of his being choked
The steadfast voice which cried, ‘ I will not yield,
I will not wrong my blood with treachery
To what is right—the gods deliver him.’

“ ’Twas well ye marked him not that other day
When he broke first into the citadel
Deserted by the tyrant, and there found,
Whiter, more stone-like than the marble shaft,
’Gainst which she crouched from him in speechless
fear,

His wife, his long-lost Arete, and went
And drew her white hands from her face and said,
‘ My wife, my own, thy Dion comes again,
And his great love doth wash thy body clean
From sins forced on thee, which were not thine own.’
For as she rose and clung about his neck,
Panting and quivering like a hunted fawn,
She downward bent her face in guileless shame
And told him, with her cheek against his breast,
How through those years of captive misery
She, like a priestess, had in secret shrine
Of wedded heart kept ever bright and pure
The vestal flame of her great love for him.
’Twas well ye marked not, Syracusan men,
How unlike stone was Dion then, how fell
His woman’s tears upon her woman’s hair.

'Twas well ye heard not what his heart pulsed out,
Without one word, into her tight-pressed ear,
Else might ye and your wives have called him weak,
When ye had seen that inner self laid bare
Which he forsook to serve his native land.

"A strong tree which has braved a thousand storms
May totter in the wind which brings its fall,
So now methinks my pride is dying down
When thus I talk before my funeral
Of all the love, hate, duty, self-restraint,
Ingratitude and anguish, which have graved
And scarred old Dion as he is to-day,
With all his years gone by and all his deeds.

"And now, eternal gods, I come to you
Through death, with calm, irrevocable tread.
Farewell, life's toilsome warfare. Like a king,
Great gods, receive me into bliss or woe,
Whiche'er your land affordeth ; set my throne
Among the company of those who strove
To mount by inner conquest, not by blood ;
And who accept and quaff with equal mind

Pleasure or pain, defeat or victory.
I care not to be highest, only peer
Of all the great who are ingathered there ;
If needs my rank be blazoned on my throne,
Inscribe it, " Dion, Tyrant of Himself."

" Ha ! ye have found a sword ; 'tis well, for now
I shall lie down to sleep as soldier should,
Wounded in front, and by a soldier's blade.
O Syracuse, I thought to carve a rock
Rough and unhewn into a perfect shape ;
But, lo ! 'twas only clay wherewith I wrought,
And every wind and rain did melt you down
Into the common mud which tyrants love
To smooth into an easy path to power.

" Here, youths, I do not flinch ; behold my breast,
Shaggy, like front of lion, streaked with grey.
It is your glory to anticipate
Times' tardy slaughter. Come, which will be great
And first to make himself a name and steep
His weakling hands in Dion's royal blood ?
Pray you be quick ! I do not fear the pain,

But would quit life. Here is my naked heart ;
It knocks against the edges of this rib,
But yet not faster than its wont. Come, youths,
Put the sword here and drive it quickly home,
And fix your eyes upon me as I fall,
And mark ye well the grandeur of my death.
For nothing but the red flood bursting forth,
No cry, no groan, no movement of the face
Shall tell you that ye have not slain a god.
Then draw the blade out blunted where it met
The tempered edge of my self-mastering will,
And bear the crimsoned trophy through the streets,
And show it to the wondering citizens ;
That men may know and tell in aftertimes
How Dion lived and died for Syracuse."

TO A FLY IN WINTER.

GOOD day, little Fly,
Here we are—you and I,
 The children of summer ;
Warm your wings at the fire,
Take what food you desire,
Your lordship I'll hire
 As my fifer and drummer.

Outside the winds blow,
And the fast falling snow
 From the gables is drifting ;
The clouds seem to me
Like an overturned sea
Lashing field, fence, and tree,
 Never breaking or lifting.

Tune up, little Friend,
Tell me winter will end,
 And the spring-time is coming ;
When the buds with surprise
Will rub their young eyes
And look up to the skies,
 At thy fifing and drumming.

Sing me carols of May,
And of June and the hay,
 With the sweet-smelling clover ;
Of the soft winds that creep
Round my bed as I sleep,
When the dawn lights the deep,
 And the long night is over.

Sing me songs of the brook
Where the little fish look
 Up, with eyes full of wonder,
At the wind-shaken screen
Of the willows that lean
Over pools that are green
 As the boughs they sleep under.

Tune up, little Friend,
For the winter will end,—
 Be my fifer and drummer ;
And thy one song repeat,
Till its buzz and the heat
Give my dreaming the sweet
 Taste of meadows and summer.

DESTINY.

THEY loved in youth and parted, and for years
He worshipped at her shrine through hopes and fears.

The fruits of exile 'neath an alien sky
Were garnered for an offering by-and-by ;

And all the strong endeavours of the man
Were shaped and moulded to a single plan.

They met years after in the public ways,
And talked as others might of bygone days ;

And he, ere that day's sun died down in flame,
Set sail once more for lands from whence he came.

There, till the end, he lived a life apart,
Still worshipping the image at his heart.

A WAIF.

THIS place is holy, Christ has been
In it to-day ;
The little girl behind this screen
Has passed away.

Her soul has sought the boundless deep
Beyond these skies.
Then fold her wasted hands to sleep,
And close her eyes.

No more their glazing pupils see
This crowded ward ;
She walks now in eternity
Beside her Lord.

Put back the dark hair from her brow,
And smooth her cheek ;
Those white lips would be praying now
If they could speak.

Make straight each crippled limb again,
And raise her head ;
It once would make her cry with pain
To touch her bed.

The winter shadows as they fall
Begin to hide
The little texts upon the wall
That were her pride.

But where she wanders far away
The hills are bright ;
She rests, our little waif and stray,
With God to-night.

IN THE CHURCHYARD.

AS now my feet are straying
Where all the dead are lying,
O trees, what are ye saying
That sets my soul a-sighing?

Your sound is as the weeping
Of one that dreads the morrow,
Or sob of sad heart sleeping
For fulness of its sorrow.

Methinks your rootlets, groping
Beneath the dark earth's layers,
Have found the doubt and hoping,
The blasphemies and prayers

Of hearts that here are feeding
The worm ; and now, in pity,
Ye storm with interceding
The floor of God's great city.

THE CRIPPLE.

I MET once, in a country lane,
A little cripple, pale and thin,
Who from my presence sought again
The shadows she had hidden in.

Her wasted cheeks the sunset skies
Had hallowed with their fading glow ;
And in her large and lustrous eyes
There dwelt a child's unuttered woe.

She crept into the autumn wood,
The parted bushes closed behind ;
Poor little heart, I understood
The shameless shame that filled her mind.

I understood, and loved her well
For one sad face I loved of yore,—
And down the lane the dead leaves fell,
Like dreams that pass for evermore.

THE WAYSIDE CROSS.

A WAYSIDE cross at set of day
Unto my spirit thus did say :

“ O soul, my branching arms you see
Point four ways to infinity.

“ One points to infinite above,
To show the height of heavenly love.

“ Two point to infinite width, which shows
That heavenly love no limit knows.

“ One points to infinite beneath,
To show God's love is under death.

“ The four arms join, an emblem sweet
That in God's heart all loves will meet.”

I thanked the cross as I turned away
For such sweet thoughts in the twilight grey

CALVARY.

O SORROWFUL heart of humanity, foiled in thy fight
for dominion,
Bowed with the burden of emptiness, blackened
with passion and woe ;
Here is a faith that will bear thee on waft of
omnipotent pinion
Up to the heaven of victory, there to be known
and to know.

Here is the vision of Calvary, crowned with the
world's revelation,
Throned in the grandeur of gloom and the
thunders that quicken the dead ;
A meteor of hope in the darkness shines forth like
a new constellation,
Dividing the night of our sorrow, revealing a path
as we tread.

Now are the portals of death by the feet of the
Conqueror entered ;

Flames of the sun in his setting roll over the city
of doom

And robe in imperial purple the Body triumphantly
centred,

Naked and white between thieves and 'mid ghosts
that have crept from the tomb.

O soul, that art lost in immensity, craving for light
and despairing,

Here is the hand of the Crucified, pulses of love in
its veins,

Human as ours in its touch, with the sinews of Deity
bearing

The zones of the pendulous planets, the weight of
the winds and the rains.

Here, in the Heart of the Crucified, find thee a refuge
and hiding,

Love at the core of the universe, guidance and
peace in the night ;

Centuries pass like a flood, but the Rock of our
Strength is abiding,
Grounded in depths of eternity, girt with a mantle
of light.

Lo, as we wonder and worship, the night of the
doubts that conceal Him
Rolls from the face of the dawn till His rays
through the cloud-fissures slope ;
Vapours that hid are condensed to the dews of His
grace that reveal Him,
And shine with His light on the hills as we mount
in the splendour of hope.

AMONG THE SPRUCES.

'TIS sweet, O God, to steal away,
Before the morning sun is high,
Upon some frosty winter's day,
When not a cloud is on the sky,
And all the world is white below,
Knee-deep with freshly-fallen snow,—

To steal into the silent woods
Before the trees are quite awake,
And watch them in their snowy hoods
A rough-and-ready toilet make,
When in the little breezes creep
And rouse them gently from their sleep.

'Tis sweet, O God, to kneel among
The snow-bent trees, and lift the mind
Above the boughs where birds have sung
Above the pathways of the wind,

Into the very heart of space,—
To where the angels see Thy face.
And while my spirit mounts in prayer,
So keen becomes its mystic sight,
That through the sunshine in the air
I see a new and heavenly light,
And all the bowed woods seem to be
Acknowledging the Trinity.

THE TWO MISTRESSES.

AH, woe is me, my heart's in sorry plight,
Enamoured equally of Wrong and Right ;
 Right hath the sweeter grace,
 But Wrong the prettier face :
Ah, woe is me, my heart's in sorry plight.

And Right is jealous that I let Wrong stay ;
Yet Wrong seems sweeter when I turn away.
 Right sober is, like Truth,
 But Wrong is in her youth ;
So Right is jealous that I let Wrong stay.

When I am happy, left alone with Right,
Then Wrong flits by and puts her out of sight ;
 I follow and I fret,
 And once again forget
That I am happy, left alone with Right.

Ah, God ! do Thou have pity on my heart !

A puppet blind am I, take Thou my part !

Chasten my wandering love,

Set it on things above :

Ah, God ! do Thou take pity on my heart !

AT LAUDS.

'TIS sweet to wake before the dawn,
When all the cocks are crowing,
And from my window on the lawn
To watch the veil of night withdrawn,
And feel the fresh wind blowing.

The murmur of the falls I hear,
Its night-long vigil keeping ;
And softly now, as if in fear
To rouse their neighbours slumbering near,
The trees wake from their sleeping.

Dear Lord, such wondrous thoughts of Thee
My raptured soul are filling,
That, like a bird upon the tree,
With sweet yet wordless minstrelsy
My inmost heart is thrilling.

THE EVERLASTING FATHER.

THOU whose face is as the lightning and whose
 chariot as the sun,
Unto whom a thousand ages in their passing are as
 one,
All our worlds and mighty systems are but tiny
 grains of sand
Held above the gulfs of chaos in the hollow of Thy
 hand.

Yea, we see Thy power about us, and we feel its
 volumes roll
Through the torrent of our passions and the stillness
 of the soul,
Where its visions light the darkness till the dawn
 that is to be,
Like the long auroral splendours on a silent polar
 sea.

Then uplift us, great Creator, to communion with
Thy will ;

Crush our puny heart-rebellions, make our baser
cravings still.

Thou whose fingers through the ages wrought with
fire the soul of man,

Blend it more and more forever with the purpose of
Thy plan.

Speak, O Lord, in voice of thunder, show Thy
footsteps on the deep ;

Pour Thy sunshine from the heavens on the blinded
eyes that weep ;

Fill the harmonies of nature and exalt our human
love

Till the whole world is an image of the glorious God
above.

VAN ELSSEN.

GOD spake three times and saved Van Elsen's soul ;
He spake by sickness first, and made him whole ;
 Van Elsen heard Him not,
 Or soon forgot.

God spake to him by wealth ; the world outpoured
Its treasures at his feet, and called him lord ;
 Van Elsen's heart grew fat
 And proud thereat.

God spake the third time when the great world smiled,
And in the sunshine slew his little child ;
 Van Elsen like a tree
 Fell hopelessly.

Then in the darkness came a voice which said,
" As thy heart bleedeth so My heart hath bled ;
 As I have need of thee,
 Thou needest Me."

That night Van Elsen kissed the baby feet,
And kneeling by the narrow winding sheet,
 Praised Him with fervent breath
 Who conquered death.

OLD LETTERS.

THE house was silent, and the light
Was fading from the western glow ;
I read, till tears had dimmed my sight,
Some letters written long ago.

The voices that have passed away,
The faces that have turned to mould,
Were round me in the room to-day,
And laughed and chatted as of old.

The thoughts that youth was wont to think,
The hopes now dead forevermore,
Came from the lines of faded ink,
As sweet and earnest as of yore.

I laid the letters by, and dreamed
The dear dead past to life again ;
The present and its purpose seemed
A fading vision full of pain.

Then, with a sudden shout of glee,
The children burst into the room ;
Their little faces were to me
As sunrise in the cloud of gloom.

The world was full of meaning still,
For love will live though loved ones die ;
I turned upon life's darkened hill
And gloried in the morning sky.

LOST LOVE.

LOVE has gone a-straying,
Like a cloud in May,
Down the silent wind-ways,
Past the bounds of day.
When will he return again?
When will his fire burn again?
I am broken-hearted
Since sweet Love departed.

Love has gone a-straying—
Call him back to me,
Up the silent wind-ways,
Over land and sea.
Tell him he must bring again
Joys that I can sing again ;
I am broken-hearted
Since sweet Love departed.

Love has gone a-straying,
Foolish, foolish Love,
Seeking up the wind-ways
For the stars above ;
Tell him here are flowers as fair,
Tell him here are hours as rare,
While the earth is dressed in spring
And the merry birds do sing,
And the brooks and rivers run
Laughing at the staid old sun ;
Call Love home again,
Bid him not roam again,—
I am broken-hearted
Since sweet Love departed.

BURIED LOVE.

LOVE hath built himself a house
Underneath the snow,
Where, amid the winter's storm,
He can keep his body warm,
When the winds do blow.

It is lined with leaves that fell
Half a year ago,
And around it linger yet
Odours of spring violet,
Underneath the snow.

If you come and try to peep
Into what's below,
Laughing loud, as if in fun,
Love jumps up and makes you run,
Pelting you with snow.

What does Love do night and day?
Would you like to know?
In the dark he sits and weeps
For a little maid that sleeps—
Sleeps beneath the snow.

And when spring shall come again
And the warm winds blow,
Tears have made his sight so dim
That the world will seem to him
Buried still in snow.

MUTE LOVE.

LOVE was wanting songs to sing
On a golden day,
When the earth was bright with Spring
And the flowers of May.

So he lay beside the brink
Of a quiet stream,
Where the cattle go to drink
And the clouds to dream.

Sunbeams lit the woods around,
Breezes fanned his cheek,
And the blossoms on the ground
Almost seemed to speak.

In the branches overhead
Robin sang his love,
And the tender things he said
Filled the skies above.

Flitting through the scented air
Where the stream was bright,
Little flies went here and there,
Crazy with delight.

But though all were bright and glad,
Silent was Love's lute,
For such happiness he had
That his lips were mute.

So he lay there in the grass
By the quiet stream,
And he watched the cattle pass
And the shadows dream,

Till when evening, dumb and grey,
Closed the buds that had uncurled,
Full of song he stole away
Down the music of the world.

LOVE SLIGHTED.

LOVE built a chamber in my heart,
A daintier ne'er was seen ;
'Twas filled with books and gems of art
And all that makes a lover's part
True homage to his queen.

The ceiling was of silver bright
That showed the floor below ;
The walls were hung with silk so white
That e'en the mirror was to sight
A slope of driven snow.

Then Love threw open wide the door,
And sang, as in a dream,
A song as sweet as bird can pour
Above the sunlight-marbled floor
Of some clear forest stream.

He sang of youth that ne'er grows old,
Of flowers that ne'er decay,
Of wine whose sweetness is not told,
Of honour bright, and courage bold,
And faith more fair than they.

And many a maiden passed me by,
Though some would hear and start,
But thought the singing was so high
It came from somewhere in the sky,
And not from my poor heart.

So years have come and years have flown
Adown the sunset hill,
But Love still sits and sings alone,
And, though his voice has sweeter grown,
My heart is empty still.

LOVE'S FOOTPRINTS.

LOVE once wandered on the shore
Where these lonely mountains stand,
And the surf for evermore
Whitens down the waste of sand.

Here are footprints ! see, he went
By the sea's edge in his play ;
Here perchance his bow was bent,
And his target was the spray.

There he stooped and wrote his name—
Straggling letters by the tide—
And when sunset bursts in flame
Over shore and mountain-side,

Brightly will the letters glow,
Golden will those footprints be,
Made by young Love long ago
As he wandered by the sea.

LOVELORN.

LOVE met a swain that drove his load,
When evening shades were falling,
And in the trees above the road
The rooks were loudly calling.

He sauntered by his lumbering cart,
A simple swain and burly,
Ill formed to play a lover's part,
His manners coarse and surly.

He did not see the autumn gold
That strewed the leafy alley,
He cared not for the tints untold
That lit the sunset valley.

His buskins were all grey with dust,
His smock was black and gritty ;
Though in his mouth a pipe was thrust,
He hummed a country ditty.

“Good morrow, gentle sir,” said Love,
“I fear you’ll count me stupid,”
(The rooks laughed in the trees above—
They knew the voice of Cupid.)

“I’ve lost my way, good sir, to-night,
And don’t know where to find it ;
You see that hill that fades from sight,
My house lies just behind it.

“O, good sir, as your heart is true,
Take pity on my sorrow ;
Let me to-night go home with you,
And I will leave to-morrow.”

The swain, content a friend to see,
Though wishing he were older,
“Get up, my little man,” quoth he,
And perched him on his shoulder.

Ah me ! how sweet that evening walk,
With young Love softly smiling
Upon his arm, and with fair talk
The weary hours beguiling.

Poor swain, he saw with wondering eyes
The valley filled with splendour,
And in the love-light of the skies
His heart grew soft and tender.

But on the morrow Love had gone,
Since then he comes back never ;
The simple heart he rested on
Now aches and aches forever.

THE SPRITE.

A LITTLE sprite sat on a moonbeam
When the night was waning away,
And over the world to the eastward
Had spread the first flush of the day.
The moonbeam was cold and slippery,
And a fat little fairy was he ;
Around him the white clouds were sleeping,
And under him slumbered the sea.

Then the old moon looked out of her left eye,
And laughed when she thought of the fun,
For she knew that the moonbeam he sat on
Would soon melt away in the sun ;
So she gave a slight shrug of her shoulder,
And winked at a bright little star—
The moon was remarkably knowing,
As old people always are.

“Great madam,” then answered the fairy,

“No doubt you are mightily wise,
And know possibly more than another
Of the ins and the outs of the skies.
But to think that we don’t in our own way
An interest in sky-things take,
Is a common and fatal blunder
That sometimes you great ones make.

“For I’ve looked up from under the heather,
And watched you night after night,
And marked your silent motion,
And the fall of your silvery light.
I have seen you grow larger and larger,
I have watched you fade away ;
I have seen you turn pale as a snowdrop
At the sudden approach of day.

“So don’t think for a moment, great madam,
Tho’ a poor little body I be,
That I haven’t my senses about me,
Or am going to drop into the sea.
I have had what you only could give me—

A pleasant night ride in the sky ;
But a new power arises to eastward,
So, useless old lady, good-bye."

He whistled a low sweet whistle,
And up from the earth so dark,
With its wings bespangled with dewdrops,
There bounded a merry lark.
He's mounted the tiny singer
And soared through the heavens away,
With his face all aglow in the morning,
And a song for the rising day.

THE POET'S SONG.

I HID in the world and sang,
And I sang so loud and long
That all the ages rang
With the echoes of my song.

I sang of the earth and sky,
I sang of the whispering seas,
I sang of the mountains high,
I sang of the flowers and trees ;

Till heaven and earth were ringing,
And all the people heard,
And they said, " We love his singing,
For his song is the song of the bird."

*ON DARWIN'S TOMB IN WESTMINSTER
ABBEY.*

THE Muse, when asked what words alone
Were worthy tribute to his fame,
Took up her pen, and on the stone
Inscribed — his name.

THE COLOURS OF THE FLAG.

WHAT is the blue on our flag, boys ?

The waves of the boundless sea,
Where our vessels ride in their tameless pride
And the feet of the winds are free ;
From the sun and smiles of the coral isles
To the ice of the South and North,
With dauntless tread through tempests dread
The guardian ships go forth.

What is the white on our flag, boys ?

The honour of our land,
Which burns in our sight like a beacon light
And stands while the hills shall stand ;
Yea, dearer than fame is our land's great name,
And we fight, wherever we be,
For the mothers and wives that pray for the lives
Of the brave hearts over the sea.

THE COLOURS OF THE FLAG.

What is the red on our flag, boys?
The blood of our heroes slain
On the burning sands in the wild waste lands
And the froth of the purple main.
And it cries to God from the crimsoned sod
And the crest of the waves outrolled
That He send us men to fight again
As our fathers fought of old.

We'll stand by the dear old flag, boys,
Whatever be said or done,
Though the shots come fast, as we face the blast,
And the foe be ten to one ;—
Though our only reward be the thrust of a sword
And a bullet in heart or brain,
What matters one gone, if the flag float on
And Britain be lord of the main.

SUNRISE.

O RISING Sun, so fair and gay,
What are you bringing me, I pray,
Of sorrow or of joy to-day ?

You look as if you meant to please.
Reclining in your gorgeous ease
Behind the bare-branched apple trees.

The world is rich and bright, as though
The pillows where your head is low
Had lit the fields of driven snow.

The hoar-frost on the window turns
Into a wood of giant ferns
Where some great conflagration burns.

And all my childhood comes again
As lightsome and as free from stain
As those frost-pictures on the pane.

SONNETS.

*INSCRIPTION WRITTEN IN A BOOK
OF SONNETS.*

When, in life's house, life's cares are vexing thee,
Look through these windows on Eternity.

QUEBEC.

FIERCE on this bastion beats the noon-day sun ;
The city sleeps beneath me, old and grey ;
On convent roofs the quivering sunbeams play,
And batteries guarded by dismantled gun.
No breeze comes from the Northern hills which run
Circling the blue mist of the Summer's day ;
No ripple stirs the great stream on its way
To those dim headlands where its rest is won.

What thunders shook these silent crags of yore !
What smoke of battle rolled up plain and gorge
While two worlds closed in strife for one brief
span !
What echoes still come ringing back once more !
For on these heights of old God set His forge ;
His strokes wrought here the destinies of man.

The King's Bastion, 1899.

TO THE SEA.

O STRANGE, sublime, illimitable Sea,
Majestic in thy sovran self-control,
And awful with the furious tides that roll
Round Earth's proud cliffs, who bow their heads to
thee ;—

Thou art like God in thy vast liberty.
Thy throne is the wide world from pole to pole,
Thy thunders are Time's passing bell, and toll
The knell of all that has been, is, and is to be.

O mighty rock-bound spirit, bright to-day,
To-morrow leaden 'neath the clouds of gloom,
Or mystic with the stars that overspan,—
Beneath thy billows, where the wild winds play,
There broods a darkness deeper than the tomb,
In caverns voiceless since the world began.

ISCARIOT.

MEEK, passionless, precise, with pallid face,
Judas grew up, his mother's constant joy,
Who thanked Jehovah daily that her boy
Of boyhood's viciousness had not a trace.
Yet, in the heart of that which she thought grace
A devil lurked, more subtle to destroy
Than any other Satan doth employ
To wreak his vengeance on the human race.

In after years the man's soul grew so dead
That when he met Love's Self and held Love's
Hand,
Nay, kissed Love's Lips, he still could Love with-
stand.

Too late the thirst which drove him to his doom
Was quenched, when back the abhorrent daylight fled
From that lone gibbet darkening in the gloom.

TIME.

I SAW Time in his workshop carving faces ;
Scattered around his tools lay, blunting griefs,
Sharp cares that cut out deeply in reliefs
Of light and shade ; sorrows that smooth the traces
Of what were smiles. Nor yet without fresh graces
His handiwork, for oftentimes rough were ground
And polished, oft the pinched made smooth and
round ;
The calm look, too, the impetuous fire replaces.

Long time I stood and watched ; with hideous grin
He took each heedless face between his knees,
And graved and scarred and bleached with
boiling tears.

I wondering turned to go, when, lo, my skin
Feels crumpled, and in glass my own face sees
Itself all changed, scarred, careworn, white with
years !

ROME.

IMPERIAL city, slumb'ring on the throne
Of vanished empire, once thy voice and hands
Rocked the wide world ; thy fingers wove the lands
Into thy girdle ; who for crown alone
Didst wear the stars. Yet still in undertone
Man hears thy deathless utterance, though Time's
sands
Roll centuries ; thou clasp'st the earth with bands
Of speech, art, law, and subtle powers unknown.

Thou wast not meant to die ; thy mighty heart
Pulsed with the universe. Thy deeds of old
Flame like the sunset sky through clouds which
throng ;
They blazon on thy throne a name apart
In red of mighty victories, in gold
Of all things valourous and great and strong.

MANHOOD.

WITH child-faith dead, and youth-dreams gone like
mist,

We stand, at noon, beneath the blazing sun

Upon life's dusty road, our course half done.

No more we stray through woods where birds hold
tryst,

Nor over mountains which the dawn hath kissed ;

In glare and heat the race must now be run

On this blank plain, while round us, one by one,

Our friends drop out and urge us to desist.

Then from the brazen sky rings out a voice,

" Faint not, strong souls, quit you like men, rejoice,

That now like men ye bear the stress and strain,

With eyes unbound seeing life's naked truth.

Gird up your loins, press on with might and main,

And taste a richer wine than that of youth."

DEATH AND THE CHILD.

DEATH met a little child beside the sea ;
The child was ruddy and his face was fair,
His heart was gladdened with the keen salt air,
Full of the young waves' laughter and their glee.
Then Death stooped down and kissed him, saying :
 " To thee,
My child, will I give summers rare and bright,
And flowers, and morns with never noon or night,
Or clouds to darken, if thou'lt come with me."
Then the child gladly gave his little hand,
And walked with Death along the shining sand,
And prattled gaily full of hope, and smiled
As a white mist curled round him on the shore
And hid the land and sea for evermore—
Death hath no terrors for a little child.

SHAKESPEARE.

UNSEEN in the great minster dome of time,
Whose shafts are centuries, its spangled roof
The vaulted universe, our master sits,
And organ-voices like a far-off chime
Roll thro' the aisles of thought. The sunlight flits
From arch to arch, and, as he sits aloof,
Kings, heroes, priests, in concourse vast, sublime,
Glances of love and cries from battle-field,
His wizard power breathes on the living air.
Warm faces gleam and pass, child, woman, man,
In the long multitude ; but he, concealed,
Our bard eludes us. Vainly each face we scan,
It is not he ; his features are not there ;
But, being thus hid, his greatness is revealed.

TO MY WIFE.

SWEET Lady, queen-star of my life and thought,
Whose honour, heart, and name are one with mine,
Who dost above life's troubled currents shine
With such clear beam as oftentimes hath brought
The storm-tossed spirit into harbours wrought
By love and peace on life's rough margin-line ;
I wish no wish which is not wholly thine,
I hope no hope but what thyself hast sought.
Thou lovest not, my Lady, in the wife,
The golden love-light of our earlier days ;
Time dims it not, it mounteth like the sun,
Till earth and sky are radiant. Sweet, my life
Lies at thy feet, and all life's gifts and praise,
Yet are they nought to what thy knight hath won.

COLUMBUS.

HE caught the words which ocean thunders hurled
On heedless eastern coasts in days gone by,
And to his dreams the ever-westerling sky
The ensign of a glorious hope unfurled ;
So, onward to the line of mists which curled
Around the setting sun, with steadfast eye,
He pushed his course, and, trusting God on high,
Threw wide the portals of a larger world.

The heart that watched through those drear autumn
nights
The wide, dark sea, and man's new empire sought,
Alone, uncheered, hath wrought a deed sublime,
Which, like a star behind the polar lights,
Will shine through splendours of man's utmost
thought
Down golden eras to the end of time.

DEATH AND LIFE.

QUOTH Death to Life: "Behold what strength is mine !

All others perish, yet I do not fail ;

Where life aboundeth most, I most prevail ;

I mete out all things with my measuring line."

Then answered Life : " O boastful Death, not thine

The final triumph ; what thy hands undo

My busy anvil forgeth out anew ;

For one lamp darkened I bring two to shine."

Then answered Death : " Thy handiwork is fair,

But a slight breath will crumble it to dust."

" Nay, Death," said Life, " for in the vernal air

A sweeter blossom breaks the winter's crust."

Then God called down and stopped the foolish strife ;

His servants both—God made both Death and Life.

SOLOMON.

A DOUBLE line of columns, white as snow,
And vaulted with mosaics rich in flowers,
Makes square this cypress grove where fountain
showers

From golden basins cool the grass below ;
While from that archway strains of music flow,
And laughter of fair girls beguiles the hours.
But brooding, like one held by evil powers,
The great King heeds not, pacing sad and slow.

His heart hath drained earth's pleasures to the lees,
Hath quivered with life's finest ecstasies ;
Yet now some power reveals as in a glass
The soul's unrest and death's dark mysteries,
And down the courts the scared slaves watch him
pass,
Reiterating, "*Omnia vanitas!*"

THE HEAVEN OF LOVE.

I ROSE at midnight and beheld the sky
 Sown thick with stars, like grains of golden sand
 Which God had scattered loosely from his hand
Upon the floorways of his house on high ;
And straight I pictured to my spirit's eye
 The giant worlds, their course by wisdom planned,
 The weary waste, the gulfs no sight hath spanned,
And endless time forever passing by.

Then, filled with wonder and a secret dread,
 I crept to where my child lay fast asleep,
With chubby arm beneath his golden head.
What cared I then for all the stars above ?
 One little face shut out the boundless deep,
One little heart revealed the heaven of love.

LOVE'S ETERNITY.

BETWEEN the stars the light-waves on and on
Roll from the scenes of earth's past history
Unto the margins of eternity.
No day is lost of all that ever shone,
Each with its story into space hath gone,
So that, to-night, some distant world may see,
Looking at earth, the Cross on Calvary,
Or the green plain and camps at Marathon.

Dear heart, whose life is woven into mine,
Who art the light and music of my days,
We move towards death, yet let us have no fear;
If nothing dies, not even light's faintest rays,
Sure that vast love which links my soul with thine
Marks for eternity our union here.

IN MEMORIAM. E. S.

HER love was that full love which, like a tide,
Flows in and out life's smallest gulfs and bays,
And fills with music through long summer days
Cold hearts that else would stern and dark abide.
Her smile would cheer, her faintest look could chide;
No soul too outcast, none too lowly born,
For her kind ear ; and none too high for scorn
Of mean pretence, or wrong, or foolish pride.

She loved all Nature ; mountain, stream, and tree
To her were thoughts or language for the thought
She could not utter, signs of truths too high
To set to words. Her love, too, like the tide,
Flowed daily back with cares its surface brought
To the still vast beneath eternal sky.

OUT OF THE STORM.

THE huge winds gather on the midnight lake,
Shaggy with rain and loud with foam-white feet,
Then bound through miles of darkness till they
meet

The harboured ships and city's squares, and wake
From steeples, domes and houses sounds that take
A human speech, the storm's mad course to greet ;
And nightmare voices through the rain and sleet
Pass shrieking, till the town's rock-sinews shake.

Howl, winds, around us in this silent room !
Wild lake, with thunders beat thy prison bars !
A brother's life is ebbing fast away,
And, mounting on your music through the gloom,
A pure soul mingles with the morning stars,
And with them melts into the blaze of day.

*St. Luke's Hospital,
Duluth, May 17th, 1894.*

AT NIGHTFALL.

O LITTLE hands, long vanished in the night—
Sweet fairy hands, that were my treasure here—
My heart is full of music from some sphere,
Where ye make melody for God's delight.
Though autumn clouds obscure the starry height,
And winds are noisy and the land is drear,
In this blank room I feel my lost love near,
And hear you playing—hands so small and white.

The shadowy organ sings its songs again,
The dead years turn to music at its voice,
And all the dreams come back my brain did
store.

Once more, dear hands, ye soothe me in my pain,
Once more your music makes my heart rejoice—
God speed the day we clasp for evermore !

EASTER ISLAND.

THERE lies a lone isle in the tropic seas,—
A mountain isle, with beaches shining white,
Where soft stars smile upon its sleep by night,
And every noon-day fans it with a breeze.
Here on a cliff, carved upward from the knees,
Three uncouth statues of gigantic height,
Upon whose brows the circling sea-birds light,
Stare out to ocean over the tall trees.

Forever gaze they at the sea and sky,
Forever hear the thunder of the main,
Forever watch the ages die away ;
And ever round them rings the phantom cry
Of some lost race that died in human pain,
Looking towards heaven, yet seeing no more
than they.



